



**Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona**

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FEDERAL PROSECUTOR RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE IN IRAQ

PHOENIX -- Assistant U.S. Attorney John Lopez recently returned from one of the most challenging temporary duty assignments possible for a federal prosecutor, a six-month tour in Iraq. Lopez was part of the initial group from the Department of Justice which lay the foundation for the Iraq Regime Crimes Liaison Office (RCLO) operating in Iraq to assist and advise the Iraqi Special Tribunal (IST), the Iraqi court charged with investigating and trying members of the former regime for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Lopez was one of seven Department of Justice personnel recently recognized by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales for his efforts as part of the RCLO.

On May 26, 2005, Lopez traveled to Washington, D.C. to receive the *Attorney General's Special Commendation Award* for "extraordinary service to the cause of justice as a member of the Iraq Regime Crimes Liaison Office." The award was presented by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales in the Great Hall at the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.

Lopez volunteered for this special duty and spent two months last fall in Washington D.C. preparing for the RCLO assignment. He then deployed to Iraq from December 2004 to March 2005. The RCLO mission is to train IST prosecutors and judges and to conduct field investigations concerning crimes of the former regime.

While in Iraq, Lopez was stationed in Baghdad and in northern Iraq and was primarily involved in conducting field investigations, which entailed movement throughout the country. One of his responsibilities was to document the destruction and to locate victims of, and witnesses to, regime atrocities. *(Accompanying this release is a digital photo of Lopez taken in a remote village in the Kurdish area of northern Iraq near the Iranian border. In the photo Lopez is standing on rubble that was part of a village destroyed by the regime in 1988. The structures in the background were built by surviving villagers after 1991.)*

Lopez stated that "I was truly impressed with the professionalism and courage of our Iraqi colleagues and the U.S. military. During my time in Iraq, an interpreter, an Iraqi Special Tribunal judge and several Iraqi prosecutors were assassinated. Nonetheless, the surviving Iraqis bravely continued working, without complaint, for justice in their country. I greatly respect their willingness to risk everything to deliver justice to the Iraqi people and I was honored to be a part of this effort."

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Paul K. Charlton, U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona, stated that "It is a privilege to work with outstanding prosecutors of John Lopez' caliber. His willingness to further serve his country by working in a dangerous location under dangerous conditions speaks volumes of his character and of his patriotism and I am proud that he's a part of the U.S. Attorney's Office."

Another Assistant U.S. Attorney, Steve Logan, also served in Iraq deployed as a part of the Marine Corps Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps from February to September 2004. While deployed to Iraq for six months with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (out of Camp Pendleton, Calif.), JAG Maj. Logan served in Fallujah where he was responsible for defense services for sailors and Marines serving in theater.

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